

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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SABURO NAGAI SUCCEEDS SOICHI SAITO

Mr. Saburo Nagai, former associate General Secretary of the National YMCA, became General Secretary on the retirement of Mr. Soichi Saito on September 30. Mr. Nagai was born in Koriyama, Fukushima prefecture in 1896, and started to work for the Y in 1919. In 1933 he became secretary of the Tokyo YMCA and in 1950 was elected Associate General Secretary of the National Association. Mr. Nagai attended George Williams College in Chicago in 1925 and observed Y work in the United States. Subsequently he made a tour of the Ys in Europe and India. He attended the Second World Youth Rally in Singapore and the Asian Youth Leader's Council in the Philippines in December 1953. In 1954 he received a commendation from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government for his services in the field of social education. Currently he is on the Youth Education Council of the Ministry of Education.

YOUTH RALLY AT TRINITY CATHEDRAL

A youth rally sponsored by the Youth Department of the National Christian Council was held at Trinity Cathedral on September 18 as part of a "Christian Youth Week" program. 110 youth from Baptist, Episcopal Lutheran, and The United Church attended.

VOLUNTEER EVANGELISM IN OKINAWA

Three hundred persons in Okinawa agreed to become "Volunteers" as a result of The Reverend Ryukichi Yoshida's tour of Okinawa early in September. He reports that the 37 churches and preaching centers are served by sixteen pastors and five missionaries. Membership is reported as about 2,000. Meetings were held in thirteen places with the attendance ranging from sixteen to one hundred. Regarding the last problem he said; "It doesn't always follow that all Okinawans are opposed to Americans." But they have no hope, he said, except in Christianity.

CHRISTIAN LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETS

Twenty representatives of Christian denominations affiliated with the Christian Liaison Committee (Kirisutokyo Rengo Kai) met at the Ginza Christian Center on September 24 to discuss relations with the government which appear to becoming more acute. Of special interest is a proposed investigation by the Tax Administration Agency of the financial account of Religious Juridical Persons and the recently formed Prefectural Religious Juridical Persons Council in Fukuoka prefecture. The Vice-governor is chairman and the chairman of the Board of Education is vice-chairman of Council, which has its office in the prefectural government building. Christian ministers have declined to cooperate. The Christian Liaison Committee is composed of representatives of the Catholic, Orthodox, Episcopal, United Church of Christ and some other protestant denominations.

RURAL EVANGELISM INSPECTION TOUR

The desire of Christians in Southeast Asia for closer cooperation with Japanese churches greatly impressed the Reverend Toshi Kimata, Professor of Rural Evangelism of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary on his recent six weeks tour of the area. Since there was no land reform in the Philippines, the landowner class is strong and largely Catholic while the Protestants, who number 600,000, are tenants who live in very miserable surroundings. The ill-feeling in the Philippines toward Japanese, he said, was very noticeable.

In Thailand he went to Chiengmai in the north. But because of torrential rains he was not able to inspect rural conditions. He reports that, although protestantism has been in Thailand for 150 years, there are only twenty protestant ministers to serve a membership of 20,000 in a land of twenty million people. Indonesia was not visited because of inability to get a visa.

On his way back to Japan he attended a General Meeting of the Presbyterian Church in Formosa and found many who desire closer cooperation with Japan. Okinawa was visited enroute to the Philippines. The Reverend Teiro Nagao, Chairman of the Rural Evangelism Committee, who accompanied Mr. Kimata, returned from Thailand because of illness. The tour was made under the auspices of the Asia Council on Ecumenical Mission.

KENSAKU TAZAKI VISITS PEKING

The Reverend Kensaku Tazaki reports that an amazing social revolution is underway on the Asiatic mainland today. In the religious field, he reports that there are only two Christian Churches, the United Protestant Church and the Catholic Church. There are 700,000 members in the protestant churches which are said to be continually growing. There is no indication of religious oppression, although he admits that denominational strife is strictly forbidden and that the churches are expected to tend to their own affairs. In regard to social conditions, Mr. Tazaki states that living conditions are improving, housing being provided on the basis of marital status so that youths of seventeen and eighteen can marry. This prevents undesirable social evils. Gambling, stealing, lice, flies, filth and prostitution, he says, have been eliminated, and social security is assured. The educational leaders, he asserts, have established a zoning system and all students are assigned to higher academic institutions according to their ability with tuition paid by the government.

JAPANESE EVANGELISTIC OVERSEAS MISSION

Japan Harvest, organ of the Evangelical Missionary Association, reports that a Japanese Evangelistic Overseas Mission was organized at a conference of thirteen persons who met at Hakone August 31-September 1. According to statement issued by Mr. Tsuyoshi Tadenuma and Rev. Mitsuzo Goto, the present temporary organization was established by "those Japanese who once worked abroad as missionaries and still have the desire and burden to return." The "Great Commission is meant for Japanese Christians also. Japanese committed many sins against Asians in the last war, and we would like to publicly confess this sin as Christians". They intend to establish a permanent organization as soon as they have enlisted the cooperation of "more friends who share the same burden."

The present constitution provides that the mission must be interdenominational. Only those of evangelical faith can become members and only Japanese nationals are to be sent out by the mission. However assistance from foreign sources will be welcomed. At present the mission has its office at the Japan Christian College in Suginami-ku, Tokyo.

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE WEEK

"Christian Literature Week" will be observed in various sections of the country October 21 through November 11 and the best works will be publicly commended in various ways. The motto for the period will be "Good Books of Faith for Children". Ten thousand posters have been distributed by the Japan Christian Publication Society, and the Christian Writers Association. A poll will be taken during the period to select the best work during the year and the one chosen will be commended later. Lectures are being sponsored in various sections of the country by the Literature Commission of the NCC.

GENERAL MEETING OF UNITED CHURCH

The Executive Committee of the United Church has been drafting proposals to be presented to the Ninth General Meeting of the church which will be held in Tokyo, October 23-26. These proposals concern relief for the atomic bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the much-discussed Okinawa Land Problem, the holding of a National United Church Rally in 1957, the Church building program, receipt of foreign aid, and internal organization. The Executive Committee feels that there is too much dependence on foreign funds for the headquarters budget and proposes to reduce this as early a date as possible.

COMMUNISTS TO INVITE FIFTEEN CHRISTIANS

The Reverend Junichi Asano, Minister of the Mitake Church and Chairman of the Committee on International Relations of the United Church has received word from Mr. Wu, Superintendent of the Chinese Christian Self-Help-Patriotic Movement, that the church intends to invite fifteen Japanese Christian leaders to Peking for the May Day celebration in 1957. Acceptance of such an invitation will be discussed at the General Meeting this month.

JCWS EMIGRATION COMMITTEE

A Foreign Emigration Committee has been established by Japan Church World Service in order to assist Japanese Emigration abroad and refugees from Communist China. Fifty families, who emigrated to Paraguay, were assisted this summer and plans are now underway to promote Christian emigration to Brazil and Bolivia. The Committee will be composed as follows: Honorable Junzo Sasamori, H. Tahara, Tokutaro Kitamura, Motojiro Sugiyama, who are members of parliament; Soichi Saito, Honorary Secretary of the National YMCA; Tsunetaro Miyakoda of the Japan Bible Society; three ministers, Tameichiro Kanai, Isamu Omura, Tosaji Obara and Shinji Takeda, and Mr. Rikuzo Yaguchi, chief of the Emigration Bureau of the Foreign Office, and Mr. Shigeo Toriya, Director of the Japan Overseas Emigration Association. The first meeting of the Committee is scheduled for October 18th.

WORLD SS CONVENTION NOTES

The World Sunday School Convention will be held in Tokyo August 6-13, 1958. Following which local conventions are to be held in Sapporo, Hirosaki, Sendai, Kanazawa, Nagano, Toyama, Shizuoka, Kofu, Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Okayama, Matsue, Hiroshima, Shimonoseki, Shikoku and Kyushu. Prior to the Tokyo gathering an Institute will be held in Kansai at Kobe College, Kansai Gakuin University, and Seiwa Gakuin.

Miss Jean M. MacDonald (United Church of Canada) has been appointed Associate Secretary of the Church School Department. The Reverend Masatake John Fujita is General Secretary.

SS STUDENT RALLY

A Sunday School Students Rally was held at Aoyama Gakuin, Sunday, Sept. 23, at the close of "Christian Education Week". 1,388 students representing 131 schools participated. The Reverend Seishiro Iwamura, Chairman of the Central Preparatory Committee for the World SS Convention addressed the rally. The offering of ¥117, will be used for the Convention. Approximately ¥400,000 is expected to be raised by the Pencil Sale. Already by September 24th 650,000 pencil had been distributed by the headquarters.

FAITH HEALING MISSION

Mr. Masasuke Masutomi, Director of the Japan Home Bible League, reports that a faith healing mission sponsored by local churches was recently conducted in Himeji City by the Reverend Arnulf Solvoll of Free Christian Mission of Norway. A daily average of thirty to forty people are reported to have been healed. Three prerequisites to healing required by the mission were said to be Bible teaching, pray and church attendance.

MISSIONARY STATISTICS

Missionaries affiliated with the United Church of Christ in Japan total 405 as compared with 398 a year ago. Those engaged in evangelistic work total 137 (55 men and 82 women), in education there are 187 (57 men, 130 women), in social work 15 (4 men and 14 women) and in administration 20 (10 men and 10 women). Seventy-three are on furlough and twenty-eight are in language study. The home denominational affiliation is as follows: Methodist-132, Presbyterian (North)-64, United Church of Canada-56, Congregational-44, Evangelical and Reformed-35, Evangelical and United Brethren-26, Reformed Church of America-21, Christian-19.

IN BRIEF

Mr. Tomio Muto, editor of the Christian News, was elected Executive Director of the Kyobunkan by the Board of Directors on September 10.

